

# MINDFULNESS WITH SAPIENCE WORK YOGA™

self-quantization and four practical  
steps to go from mindless to mindful



## **In this white paper, you will:**

- Identify work habits that cause stress and impact our productivity
- Understand the concept of Sapience Work Yoga™ and its four poses
- Find out about achieving work-life harmony through self-transformation

*“Don’t do any task in order to get it over with. Resolve to do each job in a relaxed way, with all your attention. Enjoy and be one with your work.”*

**Thích Nhất Hạnh, Zen Buddhist Monk**

# Introduction

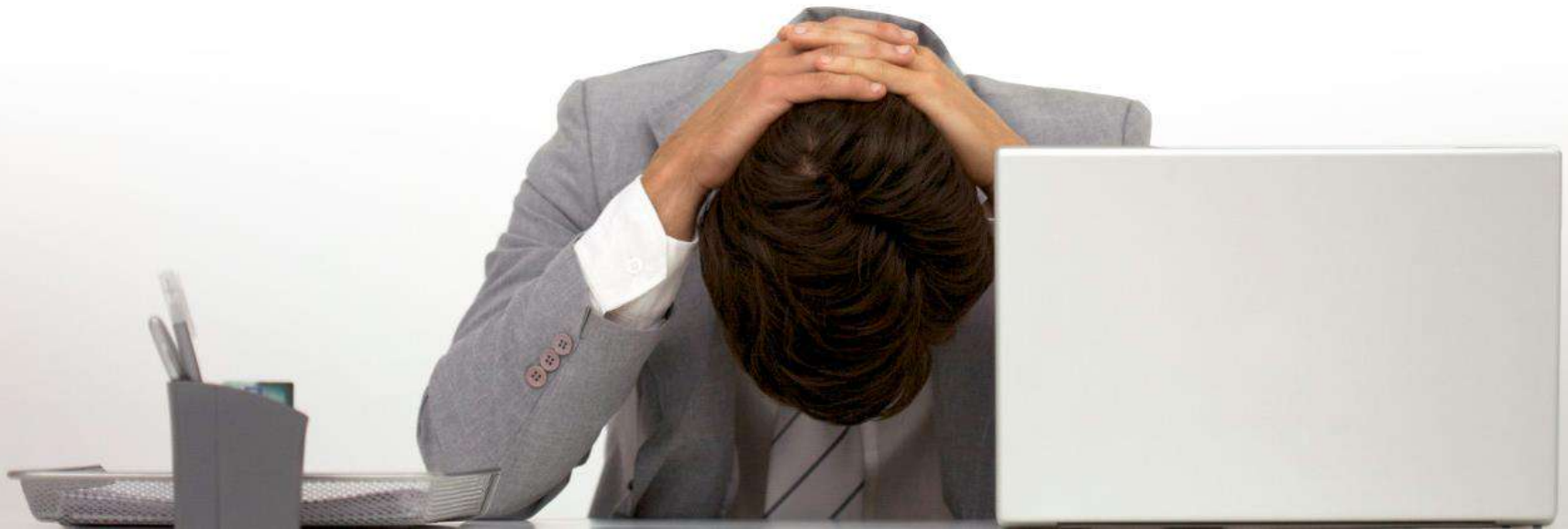
Do you ever feel that you're working longer and harder than ever before but that no matter how many hours you put in, the work just doesn't get over?

If yes, you're not alone. Employees across enterprises around the world are reporting higher levels of work-related stress. In fact, a [2013 survey by American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#)<sup>1</sup> finds that more than 33% of employees suffer from chronic stress, and only about half (51%) feel valued at work. At the same time, in today's challenging and global economy, organizations view increasing productivity as amongst the key means to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. This is a double whammy, because not only do enterprises have more stressed-out and unhappy employees than before, but they are expected to perform even better.

Employees today are being increasingly bombarded with distractions from every direction.

Our work and personal lives are increasingly intertwined and the lines between the two are fading. It's not unusual that at work, we make personal calls on our mobiles, and browse the internet for social media, news, and financial and other transactions, and check emails on the smart phone while having dinner. In an increasingly globalized environment, we are engaged virtually 24x7, and yet it is becoming impossible to really know how much work we put in. This creates stress since we seem to have lost control over our time.

Time lost is gone forever, and we all realize that we must make the most of what we have. No wonder there are over 100,000 books on Time Management available on Amazon. With companies' intent on productivity improvements, we are exhorted to work smart, and not just hard. Yet nobody really tells you how to improve.

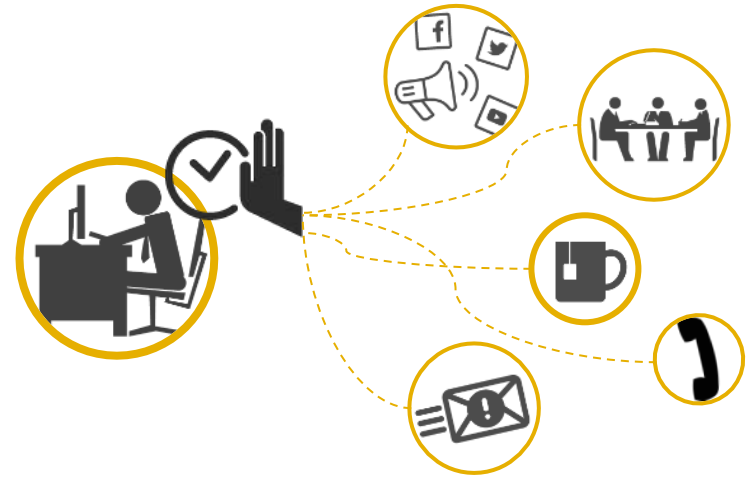


# Why Are We So Stressed?

Stress usually comes from not being able to complete assigned tasks on time. Productivity is impacted by poor work habits and here are the key reasons

## 1 Being in interrupt mode permanently

From unscheduled meetings, incessant mails to our virtual social life, there are no dearth of distractions



## 2 The fallacy of Multitasking

The ugly truth of the much lauded skill

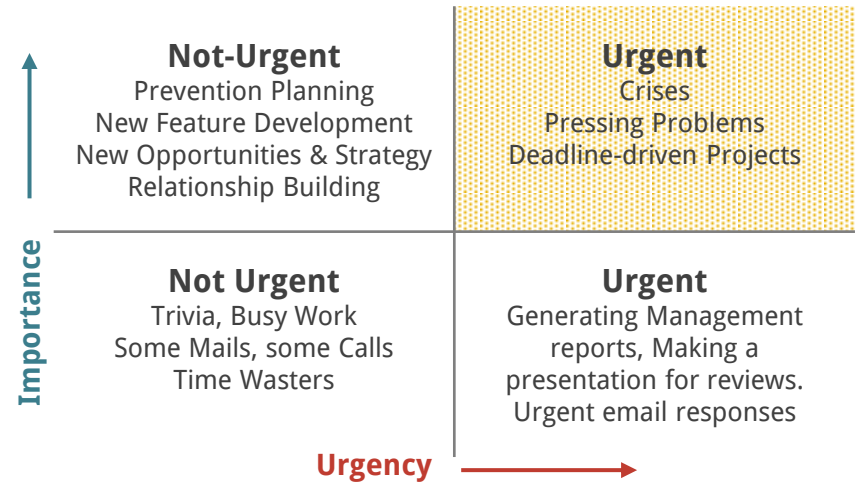


- Multi-tasking can cause a **40% drop in productivity**,
- **Waste as much as 2.1 hours** in a typical day,
- **Lower your IQ by 10 points**<sup>3</sup>!
- **Only about 2%**<sup>4</sup> can multi-task effectively, and for the remaining 98% it can do more harm than good.
- People **spend only 3 minutes on average on a single event**

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## 3 Striking balance between Urgent & Important Tasks



Stress usually comes from not being able to complete assigned tasks on time, feeling that we are juggling too many things, and not knowing how things are going to improve. Most of us have either read or know intuitively, that productivity is being impacted by poor work habits. Despite long hours at work, we end up with a feeling of not having accomplished what we set out to do. This creates frustration and begins to take a toll on our well-being.

# Sapience Work Yoga™

Work Yoga is an idea, pioneered by Sapience, which recommends implementing a few small, simple but sustained changes in our individual work habits. In much the same way that small lifestyle changes can improve our sense of well-being, Work Yoga can lead us to being both more productive and calm in office.

The changes recommended by Work Yoga are based on three principles:

## Mindful Work

If we're aware of what we're doing, that helps us focus on doing the right things at the right time and enables us to avoid distractions, thus leading to better productivity and lesser workplace stress.

## Smart Tasking

By clubbing specific kinds of tasks together and setting aside appropriate times for doing them, we can avoid having to switch contexts often and thereby increase our focus and improve efficiency.

## Conscious Improvements

The path to improvement is based on acceptance, awareness of the issues, and initiating change one step at a time.

Through their observations of nature, ancient yoga practitioners discovered a vast repertoire of energetic expressions that not only have a strong physical effect on the body but also a concomitant psychological effect. Each movement demands that we hone some aspect of our consciousness and use ourselves in a new way. Yoga defines asanas (or "poses") in which the individual gets into a posture to do certain things by focusing on it.



Sapience Work Yoga™

**4 simple "poses"**

to combat productivity loss and stress, and make you feel on top of your work day

# Sapience Work Yoga™

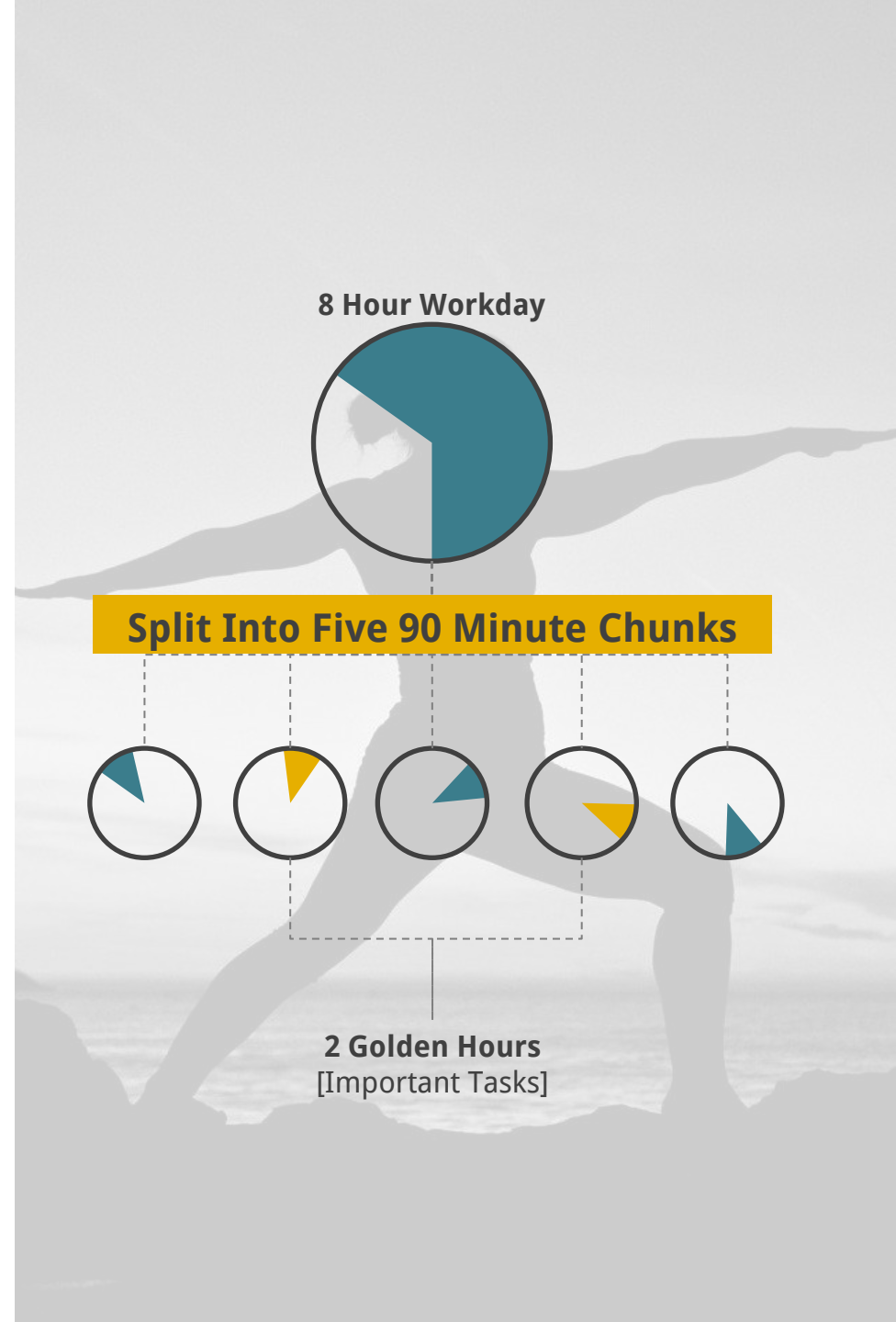
## Pose 1

## Divide & Conquer

Instead of thinking of your work day as an 8 hour stretch in which you need to accomplish a bunch of things, consider it as 5 chunks of 90 minutes each. Plan your day by reserving at least 2 chunks for your Important (not Urgent) tasks against them. Select those times when you're naturally at your most productive (*Golden Hours*). Make these chunks your Silent Time - turn off your email and chat notifications, switch off the phone ringer, avoid personal work, and just get that important task done.

If you are a relatively junior employee, then it should be possible to reserve 3 chunks for the Important work. At more senior levels, with so many meetings, perhaps only one such slot may be practical on most days.

As a manager, get everyone to agree on Golden Hours for the entire team. No meetings will be scheduled in these slots. Everyone is in silent mode, thereby reducing the probability of team members distracting one another.





# Sapience Work Yoga™

## Pose 2 In The Zone

During your 90 minute chunks reserved for important work, train yourself to get into the zone. Switch off all distractions as discussed. Don't take breaks for coffee or anything else. Avoid any personal browsing. Make sure that no meetings are scheduled. Maybe even put up a 'Do Not Disturb' sign on your desk.

Pour yourself some coffee, and get into the zone! Start work on that important task. Stay in the zone until either it is done, or the slot is over. And if you're really focusing, chances are that you won't even realize when the slot is done.

It is hard to focus for a long time - we have probably lost that ability with today's numerous distractions. Therefore the idea is to slowly build that capability to a level that works best for you. The [Pomodoro technique](#)<sup>5</sup> recommends a 25 minute stretch of focused effort, then a 3-5 minute break. Repeat this couple of times. Increase to two sets of 40+5 minutes and eventually an extended 60+ minutes of 'in the zone' time.

After an intense golden hour, wind down by summing up and ending the task at a logical point, from where you can pick up in the next chunk.





# Sapience Work Yoga™

## Pose 3

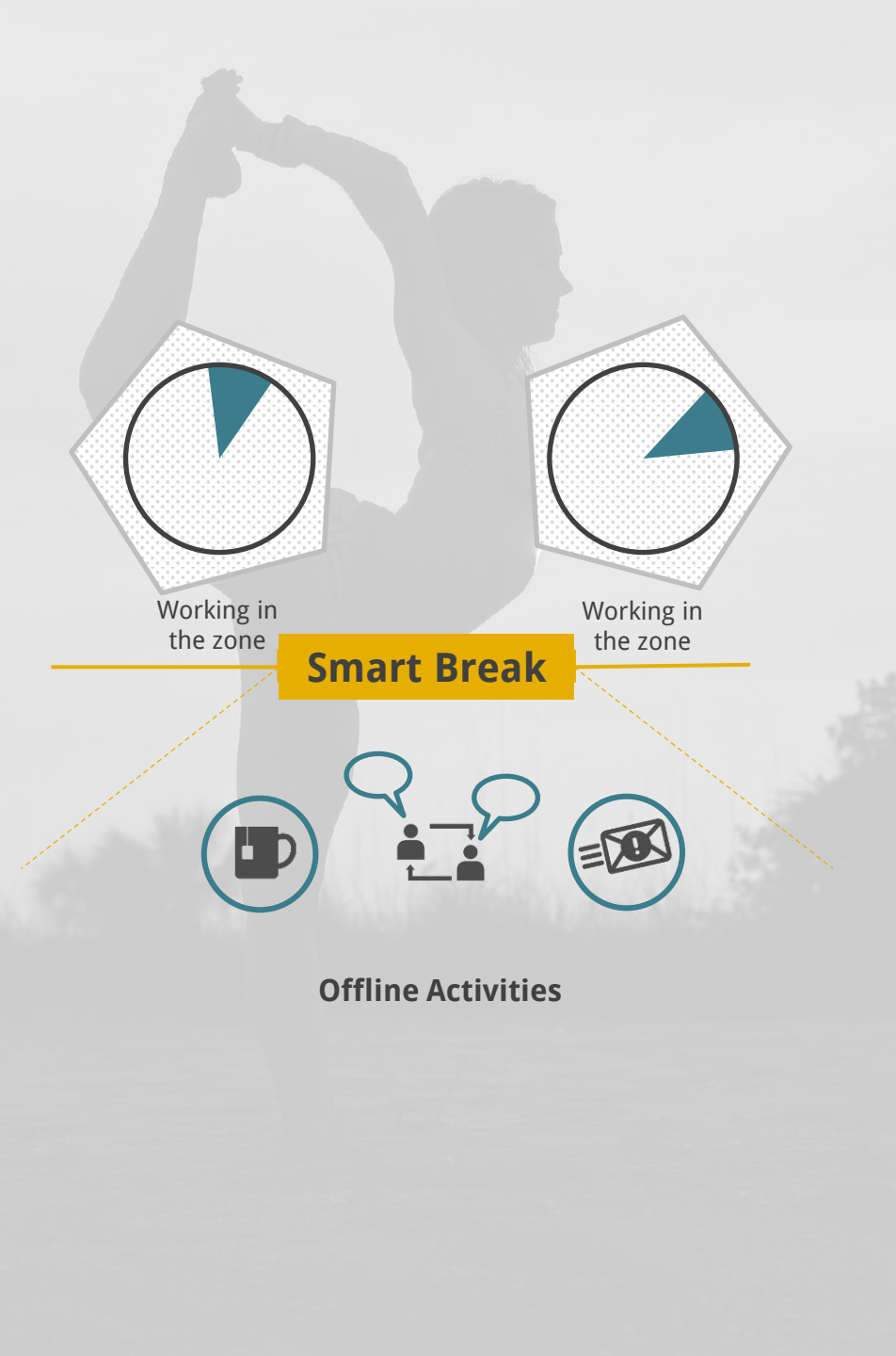
### The Right Breaks

At a macro level, taking time away from your computer is a shift in focus. We need to do this for work purposes such as meetings, business calls, lab work, talking to team members and other departments and so on. We take bio breaks and for tea/coffee, lunch, and personal work, or maybe for a walk to unwind.

Many of these are necessary and unavoidable. Instead of continuously sitting at the desk, a minimum number of breaks are good for our health. However, sometimes the breaks begin to add up without realizing the toll it is taking on our ability to get things done at our desk.

Combining 'In the Zone' time with what we call as 'Smart-Tasking your Breaks' can be a very effective method to get the benefits without over-doing it. So having spent 75 minutes on work that required a great deal of concentration, take a break to catch up on all the stuff that you wanted to do offline. Make those calls, walk across to Finance to pick the check, talk to the people you wanted to ask something, and spend time with colleagues over a quick cup of coffee. Then when you come back to your desk, you are refreshed and don't have anything pending on your mind as you get back to work.

A rule of thumb for most professionals who get work done in the office on computers is to have 5-8 smart breaks during the day.



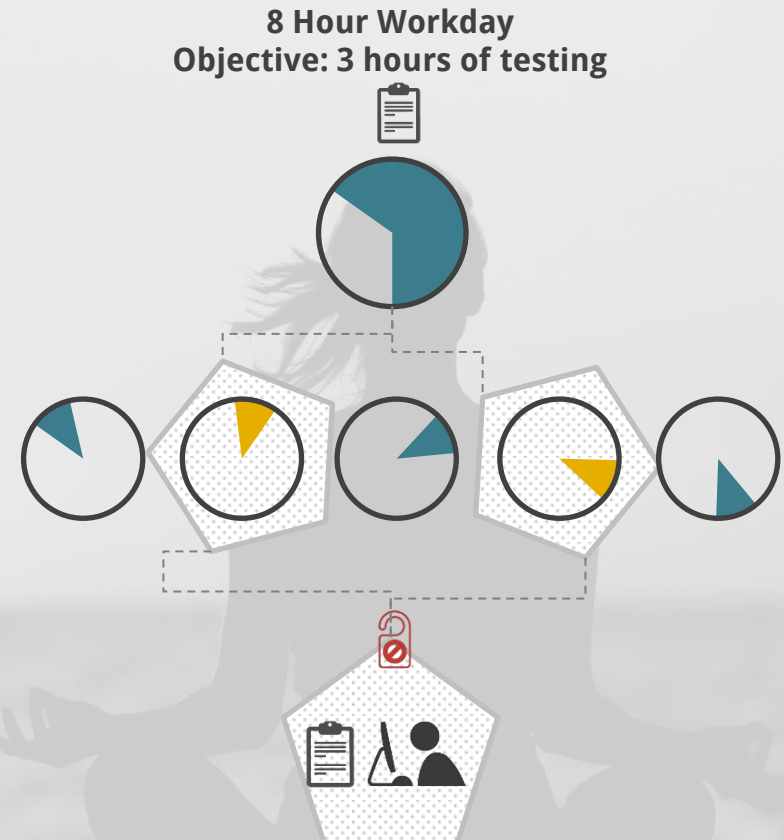
# Sapience Work Yoga™

## Pose 4

### The One Thing

Each one of us has different style of working. There is typically one activity that you know is taking too much of your time, or where you need to ensure that a certain minimum time has been spent.

Pick that one thing, and improve it on a sustainable basis by a certain measurable amount over a period of time. For example, a test engineer may want to ensure minimum 4 hours of time on proper testing. If she is averaging only three hours, then the goal can be to steadily improve towards the goal. Many of us spend lot more time on emails than we should be, and therefore practicing efficient ways to process emails will be very impactful. Practices like 'Divide and Conquer' and 'In the Zone' will make it easier to optimize on that one important activity. The test engineer can ensure that she is mostly doing testing during the Golden Hours, while emails happen at structured times during the stretches of unwind time.



**Focus on the requisite task during golden hours to meet objectives**

# Quantized Self at Work, with Sapience

Sapience provides the software to measure your work habits, decide the asana (pose) they wish to practice, and guide you towards self-transformation.

Sapience Work Yoga™ results in simple, specific and sustained changes that address the root causes that are impacting individual stress and productivity, thereby and increasing one's happiness and work-life harmony.

*“What gets measured, gets managed”.*

**Peter Drucker, Management Consultant**

# Summary

Distractions and interruptions, multi-tasking, scattered focus, and improper prioritization are not only impacting productivity, but causing stress and tiredness, which contributes to overall unhappiness in the workforce, which further decreases productivity. This can soon become a vicious downward spiral.

Sapience Work Yoga™ consists of slow but steady transformation in our work habits through **mindful work, smart tasking and conscious improvements**. If practiced diligently and on a sustained basis, it can go a long way toward fixing these problems.

With Sapience Work Yoga™, organizations can create a Mindful Enterprise that helps their employees maximize their potential at work, while encouraging them towards work-life harmony.

## REFERENCES

1. American Psychological Association and Harris Interactive, "[2013 Work and Well Being Survey](#)", March 2013.
2. Business Journal, Gloria Mark, PhD, "[Too many Interruptions at Work](#)", June 2006.
3. Forbes, Vanessa Loder, "[Why Multi-Tasking Is Worse Than Marijuana For Your IQ](#)", June 11, 2014.
4. Psychology Today, Garth Sundem, "[This is your brain on multi-tasking](#)", February 24, 2012.
5. The Pomodoro Technique, <http://pomodorotechnique.com/>.

*“Yoga is a light, which once lit, will never dim.  
The better your practice, the brighter the flame.”*

**B.K.S. Iyengar, leading Yoga teacher**